

Want to boost your positive thinking? Combine exercise and meditation



If your theme song tends to be more “Stormy Weather” than “Good Day, Sunshine,” researchers have found a novel way to help your mind sing a happier tune. A combination of meditation and aerobic exercise (not at exactly the same time!) can reduce negative thinking in people with or without clinical depression. In a new, eight-week study, a group of students practiced mindfulness-style meditation twice weekly for 30 minutes, followed by 30 minutes of aerobic exercise. About half the students carried a diagnosis of clinical depression. The combination treatment, known as MAP (mental and physical) training, was an equal-opportunity mood booster, reducing negative thinking and worrying in both groups by more than 40 percent. Participants also showed an increase in “synchronized neural

activity” in brain areas that govern planning, reasoning, and problem solving. In other words, their brains were working more harmoniously to get things done. Since both meditation and exercise have been shown to ease depression and improve focus, it’s no surprise that they can be effective together. Give this twosome a try and don’t be surprised if you discover that “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” shows up on your mind’s playlist.